

Smooth Sailing for Chandler School

By KRISTIN COPPOLA

A tour of the Chandler School construction project would brighten just about anyone's day.

Many of the new classrooms in the kindergarten and preschool wing are already displaying the bright, cheery colors of a rainbow that would make anyone feel energized. And the warm and welcoming faces you see working tirelessly throughout the school somehow emit a sense of pride and accomplishment from within, which can only be described as: ahhhhh.

In fact, 'ahhhh' is exactly what Chandler Principal Deborah Zetterberg uttered as she entered the first new kindergarten classroom. Fully painted, with most of the wood fixtures already in place, Zetterberg was impressed.

The new kindergarten rooms as well as the integrated preschool rooms now boast a 'grandiose' 1200 square feet (900 square feet in the infant rooms) and offer sizable cubby space, a sink and a back splash and a child-sized bathroom with plenty of space left over for tables, chairs and lots of open floor play. (Teachers and parents can find adult-sized bathrooms in the halls.)

The rooms and doors will be color coordinated to make it

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easy for children to find their way from one room to another. The new music and art rooms, administrative offices, conference rooms, and occupational and physical therapy rooms all offer equally impressive size and privacy. In addition, the architects have gone the extra mile to include small details to make the school more charming and less institutional-looking.

"The architects put in vaulted ceilings in the hallways to give the school less of a prison-like feeling," Building Manager Mickey McGonagle said. They also added small colorful tile designs to the brick work on the outside of the school to give the school some added character.

Once the school addition is complete—scheduled for January 2003, there will be two separate entrances to the school. The daycare and preschooler children will enter via Coppens Field through a new entrance at the south wing of the school while the first and second graders will continue to be dropped off at the front of the school.

For those unfamiliar with or unclear about the changes taking place at Chandler School, here's a quick overview: The new building will house the daycare as well as the preschoolers while the old building will house the first and second graders. However, during the renovation of the old school (scheduled to begin in January 2003), some first and second graders will find themselves temporarily housed in the new building. To accommodate this transition, the Magic Dragon daycare students will remain at DHS until September of 2003 when the entire project will be complete.

In the meantime, if you drive by the school, you will see the new playground equipment for the first and second graders being installed. This playground will be the central play area for all the kids until the

new kindergarten and preschool playgrounds are completed sometime in 2003.

"There have been no rough spots," McGonagle said of the Chandler project. "It's been nothing but a positive experience here with the help of Fred (Dalton) and Mike (Pires)."

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— Barbara Bartlett,
building committee

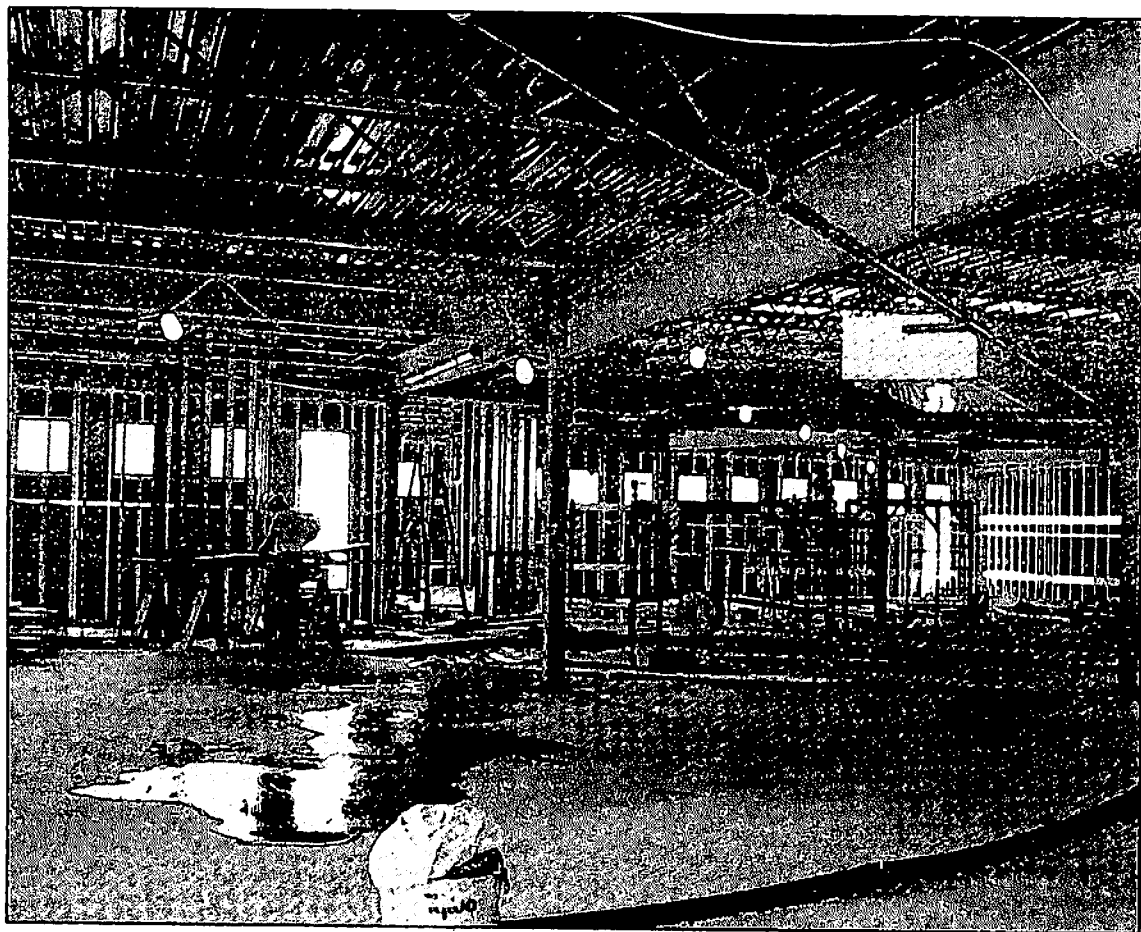
"Things can happen but they just haven't with this project," agreed Clerk of the Works Fred Dalton. "We have good subcontractors and a good spirit of cooperation."

Barbara Bartlett, a member of the building committee as well as a Chandler parent, had this to say about the project: "It's been great. We have a great contractor; a great clerk; great subcontractors. It's the smoothest project I've ever seen."

She should know, she's has been overseeing school projects like this in Boston for years. Bartlett says the difference is that those projects have been strictly renovation projects, while this one is both renovation and addition. One would think this added project would offer increased problems but, so far, it hasn't.



Chandler principal Deborah Zetterberg, Clerk of the Works, Fred Dalton, and Superintendent of Schools, Eileen Williams tour the new building facilities at Chandler.



The new music and art rooms are large enough to temporarily accommodate lunch for the entire school while the cafetorium is renovated.